archy of feudal magnates it evolved the central ruler, whose authority became more and more predominant in fact as well as in theory. For the feudal superior it substituted the independent municipality, and it led to at least the partial emancipation of the lower classes from the bonds of serfage. It brought about the recognition of the rights of the Third Estate, in opposition to the exclusive privileges of secular and clerical magnates, in government and legislation. It produced the mediaeval constitution—the forerunner, nay the mother of the modern constitution.

We have traced the progress of this political and social reaction in the various lands of Western, Central, and Southern Europe. This reaction was, we repeat, to a large extent anterior to, and independent of, what is usually called the Renascence. There are indeed traces of the influences which produced the Renascence at work in this mediaeval movement on behalf of political and social emancipation. The maxims of the Roman jurists are already perceptible, in the Middle Ages, in the arguments in support of the contentions of the emperor against the pope, or of the national king against the feudal hierarchy. An occasional voice is heard appealing to the dicta of a Seneca, or a Cicero, or the Pandects in favour of human equality and brotherhood, as well as to the teachings of the original Christ. Even the sovereignty of the people finds its champions and exponents in mediaeval writers. In general, however, the struggle for political and social emancipation in the Middle Ages was the fruit, not of an intellectual rebirth inspired by antiquity, but of self-interest, of the aspiration after the betterment of his condition inherent in man. Industrial, economic factors raised the serf to at least partial freedom ; the merchant, the artisan, to political and civic rights. Mediaeval revolution was largely a practical matter. The aspiration after rights arose from the experience of the world as it was, not as it had been. If a community became prosperous, it ultimately became free—as the word free was understood in the Middle Ages. The feudal system might not be broken up, but the conditions of feudal life were £t least enlarged, so as to give certain rights and privileges to -a larger number. The feudal lord was forced to waive claims, rights, privileges which he enjoyed at the cost of the subordination,